



11 High Gate Lane, West Hartford, CT 06107-1010  
Phone/Fax 860.519.0023  
www.ct-asbo.org

**Testimony Filed with the Appropriations Committee For  
HB6659 AA Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium June 30,2025, and Making  
Appropriations Therefor.  
February 23, 2023**

The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials offers the following comments regarding HB 6659:

**Excess Cost Reimbursement Grant.** The Governor's budget proposes to adjust the Excess Cost grant percentages of the current three-tiered threshold system to allow the State Department of Education (SDE) to expend the full appropriation beginning in FY 2023. It also ensures that the grant is capped within available appropriations in future fiscal years. We are concerned of the continued capping of the excess cost reimbursement grant. This grant, which helps support our neediest students, has been significantly underfunded for many years, while the costs of providing special education services continues to grow. This combination of factors significantly compromises the ability of districts to provide adequate educational needs for **all** children. For all these reasons, we strongly recommend that the Appropriations Committee fully fund this important grant.

**State support for IAQ.** We support fully the Governor's proposal to provide another \$150 million for each year of the biennium to provide grants-in-aid for school air quality improvements. We understand that these funds will be used to augment local investments. We encourage the State to extend this funding beyond the biennium while at the same time streamlining the application and scheduling process.

**Free School Meals.** An earlier bill, SB929, proposed that boards of education establish and operate school lunch programs for public school children without the ability to charge for any such school meals. While CASBO supports the goal of ensuring that no child goes hungry, recognizing that a hungry child is not ready to learn, the financial burden of implementing this program cannot be placed on school districts. This bill, as written, would create a new unfunded mandate for school districts at a time when they are dealing with many other priorities. Consequently, if the State deems such a program a priority, it must provide funding to implement such a proposal if it were to become law. We encourage the Appropriations Committee to authorize the full funding of a program to provide free school meals.

The education of our youth is a top priority for all of us. School officials work collaboratively with many stakeholders to maximize results that benefit both our students and our taxpayers. Proper funding of education at all levels is important to provide opportunities for successful outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important matters.

*About us: The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) is a non-profit professional association that represents school business officials throughout the State of Connecticut. School business officials work closely*

*with school boards, school superintendents, administrators, staff, public officials, and communities; and we are responsible for most aspects of school business and operations.*